

From Kelvedon Hatch To Texas

A Familial Journey
Of
The Wrights.



WRIGHT

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From Kelvedon Hatch to Texas—A Familial Journey Of The Wrights

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I. Genealogy: A Definition.

Before one begins on the pursuit of filial knowledge, or ascertaining the identity of one's ancestors; it is important to know what genealogy is. Merriam Webster's Dictionary defines it as such:

- (1) an account of the descent of a person, family, or group from an ancestor or older forms;
- (2) regular descent of a person, family, or group of organisms from a progenitor or older form: a Pedigree;
- (3) the study of family pedigrees; or,
- (4) an account of the origin and historical development of something.¹

For our purposes, it is a combination of the four. To understand how we think, or why we think what we do, we must know how our familial background developed. Influences of the past continue to affect the way we think to this day. Lacking an understanding of such development may leave a void in our understanding of ourselves. Thus, it is imperative to trace the family line back to its progenitor, or creator. In short, genealogy may be surmised as the study of the origin of identity, or self worth.

II. The Purpose Of A Surname.

The concept of identity starts with a name. Every individual carries two names. First is the name given to the person by their parents, second is the surname, or the family name. The surname represents the historical roots that a person has to his or her ancestors. Indeed, it is the link that a person has to their direct predecessors, as well as their descendants. The surname acts as an identifier. For example, the name John could represent anyone. If two Johns encounter each other, the way to distinguish one John from the other, is by their family name. Thus, in ancient times, a method of distinguishing between various individuals was developed.

Going back to the initial example of John and John, let's imagine that one John is a builder of sorts, and the other John made clothing for others. Thus, one John might be considered a wright, or one who builds things; and the other John would be a tailor of clothes. Thus, by the method developed in ancient times, the Johns implemented use of a surname, based on their trade. That is, John Wright, and John Tailor. Thus, in documents, third parties could easily distinguish between the two Johns.

III. Variations Of Spelling.

During this early period, spellings had not been uniform. The English language from that time would not be recognized by modern English speakers. Thus, some of the earlier records of the Wright family had variations on the spelling. The most common variations were: Wyrta, Rite, Write, and Wryte. Yet they all represented a singular family: Wright.

As the aforementioned example demonstrated, a wright was someone who built things. Thus, there are several variations of Wrights. Cartwright would be one who builds a cart, Wheelwright is one who builds a wheel, Boatwright built boats. Because each family built distinctive, or specialized things, they were further differentiated from their initial cousins, who were tinkers in general, i.e., Wrights.

The purpose of this text is to trace a single branch of the Wright family. Therefore, it will not cover

¹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/genealogy>

the descent of the various derivatives of Wrights, or even the cousin branches of the same family tree. Thus, we shall be focusing on the origins of the Wright Family of Texas, tracing their roots back to the earliest records that we can, while exploring the historical and social connotations which developed during, and as a result of, that journey.

IV. Origins Of The Wrights Of Kelvedon Hall.

The origins of the Wright Family are not fully shown by official records. However, the oral histories and family traditions, handed down from one generation to another, point back to Bayeux, Normandy. John Wryta and his brothers Thomas, Henry, and Sir William were all in the service of William the Bastard (or William the Conqueror).² They accompanied their King in 1066, in the infamous battle of Hastings. They fought under the banner of the King, and as a result, were given substantial land grants in the conquered territories.

Sir William Wright had been granted lands in Ireland, becoming the progenitor of the Irish Wrights. It is uncertain who was the progenitor of The Wrights of Kelvedon and White Notley, Essex, England. The first record we have dates to Thomas Wright, who was born in 1396.³ And, so it is there, that we shall begin tracing the familial line down, to the modern Wright Family in Central Texas.

I have accomplished most of my studies of the family history through the records compiled and put on the web by Albert Nye. His invaluable chart at footprints.org allowed me to connect the missing pieces from my family history, back to the earliest records.⁴ We start with the birth of **Thomas Wright**, in White Notley Essex, England. Records indicate he married Agnes Hunt, who had been born in Gosfield, County Essex, England. Moreover, we believe they gave birth to a single son, the Reverend Henry Wright. Henry was born in Upminster, Suffolk England, in 1424. However, the records do not indicate when he died.

In 1448, in Upminster, Suffolk England, Henry married Anna Whitbread. We can speculate from the choice of names here, that Henry was related to one of the brothers from Bayeux, as his name honors one of those brothers. We also know that Anna Whitbread was born in 1428 in Upminster Suffolk County, England.

Together, they had five children:

- (1) Rev. Sir John Wright;
- (2) William Wright;
- (3) Richard Wright;
- (4) Henry Wright; and,
- (5) Thomas Wright.

Rev. Sir John Wright was born on October 17, 1450, in Dagenham, County, Essex England, and died on May 5, 1509.

William Wright was born in South Weald County, Essex England in 1458. A death record for him is unclear.

Richard Wright was born in 1460, at South Weald County Essex, England.

Henry was born in 1462 at the same location.

² <http://www.geni.com/people/Rev-Henry-Wright-of-Upminster/6000000000255911801>

³ *ibid.*

⁴ <http://www.footprints.org/9-000003.htm>

And Thomas was born in the same location in 1464. As with his three older brothers, we are unsure of when they died.

Reverend, Sir John Wright, married Agnes in 1470 at Dagenham, County Essex, England. Agnes was born in 1452 in the same county. Together they had one child, Sir John Wright. We know from the records that he was an eminent theologian of Dagnams near South Weald. We know Rev. Sir John was born in Dagenham's Manor, and that he possessed the family home of White Notley. Moreover, we know he was an advowson of Upminster Church.

Sir John was born in 1488 in Kelvedon County Essex, England. Records indicate he died on October 5, 1551 in his manor house of Kelvedon Hall. Sir John married Olive Hubbard on the 18th of March 1509, in South Weald Church, Essex England. Olive was born on February 22, 1485 in Dagenham County Essex, England. Records indicate she died on June 22, 1560 at Kelvedon Hall. Sir John has a long list of interesting biographical facts. On June 20, 1509, mere months after Henry VIII took to the throne of England, Sir John became a peer in his house of lords. He was granted a coat of arms, became Lord of the Manor of Kelvedon Hall, which was approximately 16 miles Northeast of London. He purchased the lease in 1538 from the Abbey of Westminster for 493 Pounds.

With the dissolution of the Monasteries, under Henry VIII, Sir Richard Rich acquired the estate while John Wright remained as a tenant. During this time they also became tenants of Anthony Browne in the South Brook Area. We know that Sir John inherited the Manors and titles of his father, along with a coat of arms from his forefathers. This coat of arms had been confirmed to him, and in 1538 he erected Kelvedon Hall.

The will of Sir John had been drawn in the reign of Edward VI, with his Lady's will drawn on June 23, 1560. His Coat of Arms were as follows—Azure, two bars, Argent: in chief three leopards heads OR, Crest: Out of Ducal Coronet of Or, Dragons head proper.

The Church of Saint Nicholas can be traced before the Norman invasion to Ailric, a Saxon who might have been a sailor, or a Captain of a vessel. He built the church and dedicated it to St. Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors and children. The earliest official record of the church, however, was from 1344.

It is important to note that the first three John Wrights of Kelvedon were protestants. However, in the 17th century, the next John Wright converted to Roman Catholicism, at the encouragement of the famous composer, William Byrd, who lived nearby in Stondon Massey. This branch of the Wrights would remain Catholics for the remainder of their time in the Hall. Records show that a chapel had been built in secret, as it was during the time of the persecution of Catholics. We know the church to have been rebuilt in 1753, but it was abandoned for a larger building in 1895, which is located in the village of Kelvedon, as opposed to the grounds of the manor house.

Sir John and Olive had seven Children:

- (1) John (Elder) Wright, born October 10, 1510, and died October 10, 1563;
- (2) Katherine Wright, born 1513, and died 1516, at Kelvedon Hatch County Essex, England;
- (3) Lord Robert Wright, born April 9, 1516, at Kelvedon Hatch County Essex, England. He died at Brook Hall, South Weald, County Essex, England on January 26, 1586;
- (4) Alice Wright, born 1519 and married Perkins, born 1517;
- (5) John (Myddle) Wright, born June 19, 1522 in Kelvedon, and died at the same in 1558;
- (6) John (Younger) Wright, born May 4, 1524, Wrightsbridge County Essex, England, He married Joan Johanna Page, on November 17, 1540, in South Weald Church, she was born about 1526; and,

(7) Elizabeth Wright, born August 11, 1526, and married Robert Shepherd.

Lord Robert Wright proves a fascinating subject. Normally, under the feudal tradition, a second son would not inherit title. However, we know that Lord Robert was of Brook Hall, the Moat House which belonged to the Roper family, who had served Queen Catherine of Aragon. Thus he was called Lord of the Manor of Great and Little Ropers.

Moreover, he was a member of Henry VIII's House of Lords, along with his father. All of this information originates from a will dated January 17, 1587.

Lord Robert was born April 9, 1516 in Kelvedon Hatch. He died on January 25, 1586. Records indicate he married Mary Greene on September 10, 1541 at Kelvedon Hatch. Mary was the daughter of Robert Greene. She had been born on November 25, 1519 in Navestock County, Essex, England. She died in 1587 at Brook Hall.

Mary and Lord Robert had six children:

- (1) Dorothy Wright, born November 7, 1542 at Brook Hall, she married John Hatch on May 28, 1566;
- (2) Katherine Wright, born January 19, 1543, and married William Kent on November 28, 1565. He was born in 1542;
- (3) Olive Wright, born March of 1544;
- (4) John Wright, born January 16, 1545. Married Elizabeth Linsell, who was born in 1548 and died in 1602. And he died himself in 1640;
- (5) Thomas Wright born August 17, 1548, in St. Peter South Weald, County Essex, England. He died on October 21, 1617; and,
- (6) Robert Wright, born 1550.

Thomas Wright was born August 17, 1548 in St. Peter South Weald, County Essex, England, and died on October 21, 1617 in the same. Records indicate he married Roberdye Pake on April 25, 1568 in Kelvedon Hatch. She was born in 1548 at South Weald County, Essex, England. She died on November 17, 1603.

Thomas and Roberdye had 10 children:

- (1) Matthew Wright born 1566;
- (2) Mary Wright, born 1568;
- (3) Olive Wright, born 1569;
- (4) Robert Wright M.D. born 1570, and died 1600. he married Ann who was born in 1573;
- (5) Joan Wright, born 1571;
- (6) Katherine Wright, born 1573 and died 1576 at the age of 3;
- (7) Thomazine Wright born 1573;
- (8) Alice Wright, born 1575;
- (9) John Wright, born September 13, 1577 at Brook Hall, South Weald County, Essex, England. He died on May 30, 1640 at the same; and,
- (10) William Wright, born 1578.

John Wright born September 13, 1577, and having died on May 30, 1640, married Grace Glascock. Records aren't clear, but it appears they were betrothed in 1600. Grace was the daughter of Henry Glascock, and was born on May 14, 1579 in South Weald. She died in Dagenham on July 25, 1653.

John and Grace had 8 children:

- (1) John Wright, born 1602, and died 1682;
- (2) Grace Wright, born August 26, 1604 at Kelvedon. She died August 25, 1605, one day before her first birthday;

- (3) Anne Wright, born May 5, 1606, at Kelvedon;
- (4) Martha Wright born April 12, 1607 and died 1646 in London. She married Robert Sthill who was born in 1605;
- (5) Anthony Wright, born January 23, 1607 and died February 1, 1608, living only a year;
- (6) Robert Wright, born January 16, 1608;
- (7) Thomas Wright, born November 19, 1610 at Brook Hall, South Weald, County Essex, England. He died in Wethersfield Connecticut, and was the first Wright to travel to America. His death was on April 21, 1670; and,
- (8) Nathaniel Wright, Born January 19, 1617 in London.

V. Wrights Land In America.

Thomas Wright Esq. was born on November 19, 1610 at Brook Hall. He died in Wethersfield Connecticut in April 21, 1670. He married three times. His first wife was Mary Cranbroke born September 21, 1609, in Kent England, and died 1641 in Watertown Massachusetts. They married on June 14, 1630 in England.

His second wife was Margaret Butler. He married her in 1638. She died in 1645 at Wethersfield Hartford Connecticut.

His third wife was Margaret Elson, whom he married on May 2, 1647.

Thomas and his first wife, Mary Cranbroke, made history by being the first Wrights to travel to America in 1635. They traveled on the ship "S.N. and Ellen". They landed in Boston Massachusetts. After Mary died in 1640, Thomas and his children moved by caravan to Wethersfield Connecticut, establishing a homestead there. Thomas sent his wife Margaret Butler with his family back to England in 1639. They were to be cared for by his family, so she could give birth, while he fought Indians, who attempted to reclaim the settlement.

We know that Thomas was of the Massachusetts Court of Assistants, before the establishment of the Colonial Government, in Boston. He removed to Wethersfield Connecticut in 1639. He had high standing and influence. He served as deputy to the General Court of Connecticut in 1643. Then he served as Selectman in 1658, and Commissioner on Town Lines. On May 11, 1654 he became a freeman, and his name is on the 1669 list of freemen.

Moreover, along with Enoch Buck, he served as a Constable in 1668-69. He was on the Jury Court at Hartford the same year. Apparently he was involved in a church fight leading to the removal of many to Hadley, Massachusetts.

His third wife, Margaret Butler was the widow of Captain John Elson, killed by the Indians in 1637. She married Hugh Willard, but he died shortly thereafter. She then married Thomas Wright. They died within a year of each other.

Thomas and Mary Wright had 8 children:

- (1) Benjamin Wright;
- (2) Job Wright;
- (3) John H. Wright;
- (4) Thomas Wright, born August 13, 1630, at Brook Hall, and died August 23, 1683, in Wethersfield Hartford Connecticut;
- (5) Lydia Wright, born 1633, Brook Hall, married William Harris, born 1632, and then Joseph Smith, born 1632. She died in Hartford on February 15, 1690;
- (6) Ensign Samuel Wright, born March 24, 1633, in Connecticut, and died at the same in February 13,

1691;

(7) James Wright, born 1636, in Brook Hall. Died Christmas Eve 1728, in Middletown Middlesex County Connecticut; and,

(8) Deacon Joseph Wright, born March 3, 1638, South Weald. Died December 17, 1714 in Wethersfield Hartford Connecticut.

James Wright had been born in 1636 back in England. He died in Connecticut on Christmas Eve 1728. His first wife was Mary, whom he married in 1659, but she died less than a year later. He married Dorcas Weed on November 20, 1660 in Wethersfield Hartford Connecticut. She was the daughter of Jonas Weed and Mary. She was born in 1641 at Stamford, Fairfield County, Connecticut. She died on Christmas Eve 1692.

The record indicates that James was the first settler of Portland Connecticut. He and Dorcas had 11 children:

(1) Abigail Wright;

(2) Hezekiah Wright, who married Mehitable Talcott;

(3) Jacob Wright;

(4) James Wright Jr., born September 17, 1661 at Wright's Island Glastonbury Connecticut. he died Christmas Eve 1743, at Wethersfield Connecticut;

(5) Dorcas Wright, born 1665. She died December 4, 1711, at Farmington Connecticut. She married Obadiah Allen, on November 29, 1699, in Middletown Connecticut, he was born September 20, 1670. After he died, she married Nathaniel Wetmore, on December 29, 1703. he was born April 21, 1661;

(6) Lydia Wright, born January 21, 1665 in Wethersfield Hartford Connecticut. She died April 28, 1707;

(7) Thomas Wright, born May 14, 1670, at Wethersfield Hartford Connecticut, and died 1749 at Glastonbury Connecticut;

(8) Jonas Wright, born April 29, 1672 at Glastonbury, and died May 10, 1764 at Middletown Middlesex County Connecticut. He married Olive, born 1674, and died 1749;

(9) Daniel Wright, born May 1, 1674, in Glastonbury Connecticut. He died June 8, 1764;

(10) Elizabeth Wright, born 1675, married Isaac Buck;

(11) Hannah Wright, born 1670, in Glastonbury Connecticut.

Daniel Wright was born May 1, 1674, and died June 8, 1764. He married Eunice Lommis, but it appears she died shortly thereafter. He then married Ellen Eleanor Benton on August 24, 1705. She was born 1682 in Wethersfield Hartford Connecticut. She died in 1749.

Daniel and Ellen had 10 children:

(1) Gideon Wright, born 1707;

(2) John Wright, born 1709;

(3) Ruth Wright, born 1711;

(4) Benjamin Wright, born 1712;

(5) William Wright, born 1715;

(6) Samuel Wright, born 1722 in Surry North Carolina. He died in 1802, in Georgia;

(7) Daniel Wright, born 1721, in Surry North Carolina;

(8) James Wright, born 1724 Surry North Carolina;

(9) Isaac Wright, born 1727 in Surry North Carolina; and,

(10) Richard Wright, born 1730, Surry North Carolina. He died in 1784, at Davidson Randolph County Line, North Carolina.

Samuel Wright was born in 1722 at Surry North Carolina. He died in 1802 in Georgia. The record doesn't indicate who his wife was, but we know that he had at least one son.

(1) Johnson Wright, born in 1760, in Georgia. He died in 1838.

VI. Wrights Come To Texas.

Johnson Wright was born in 1760 in Georgia, he died in 1838. There doesn't appear to be a record of his wife. He had a single child:

(1) Asa Elijah Wright, born 1795, in Warren Georgia. He traveled to Texas at the time it became a Republic, and died there in 1873.

I switch sources here, for adkins9.net provides a more complete history of Asa.⁵

Asa Elijah Wright was born on November 28, 1795 in Putnam Georgia. He died at age 77, on March 3, 1873 at Seguin, Guadalupe, Texas. He married Elizabeth "Betsy" Taylor on September 21, 1817. She was born in 1802 at Putnam, Georgia. She died at 65 years of age in 1867 in Prairie Lea, Caldwell, Texas.

Asa had been a farmer. The Texas Census of 1846 shows him living in San Augustine, Texas. By 1850 he had moved to Guadalupe, Texas.

At the start of the Civil War, he was in his 60's and was still farming. One year after the Civil War, he was retired and living at home. He married again, to Nancy Shuler Clower, on September 22, 1867, at the age of 71.

Asa and Elizabeth had 5 sons:

- (1) William Taylor Wright was the first born of twins The twins were baptized by R.E.B. Baylor. He was born October 7, 1821 in Sumter Alabama. By 1850 he lived in Montgomery Texas. He married Mary Caroline Hibbetts on January 17, 1850, in Polk, Texas. She was born October 12, 1824 in Polk, Texas. She died in 1900. They had 1 daughter, Margaret Elizabeth "Lizzie" Wright born November 19, 1850, in Robertson Texas. She married Newton Jeff Whitley in 1870. and died May 28, 1884 it is believed that the twins served as Army Chaplains in the Civil War. No record confirms this. We know that James Fayette and Charles Pleasant served in the 4th Regiment, Texas Cavalry. They were the 4th Mounted Volunteers. William died on June 12, 1883 at the age of 61, in Petteway, Robertson, Texas;
- (2) Johnson Vitinger Wright was born on October 7, 1821. He was the twin of William. He owned land in Fayette, Texas by June 28, 1839. He married Elizabeth Ann Johnson in 1847 at San Augustine, Texas. He was listed as a physician in Montgomery, Texas by 1850, according to the Federal Census of 1850, taken on June 1st of that year. By 1860, he lived in Midway, Madison, Texas. Like his brother it is believed that he served as an Army Chaplain. No record confirms this. Family tradition also says he may have been a physician in the Confederate Forces as well. By 1880 he was growing fruit in Falls County, Texas. He died on December 17, 1891 at the age of 70, in Alvin, Brazoria, Texas;
- (3) George Washington S. Wright born January 12, 1824 in Butler, Alabama. By 1850 he was a farmer in Guadalupe, Texas. He married Josephine Miers on March 6, 1853. He died on May 30, 1900, at the age of 76 at Guadalupe, Texas;
- (4) James Fayette Wright was born November 9, 1832 in Conecuh, Alabama. He married Matilda Ann Adique Miers, on March 6, 1853, at Seguin, Guadalupe, Texas. By 1860 he was a wheelwright. He served in the 4th Mounted Volunteers as a Private in the Confederate Army. he died on April 18, 1911, in Richland Springs, San Saba, Texas at the age of 78; and,
- (5) Charles Pleasant Wright. Charles was born on April 27, 1839 in Texas. By 1860 he was a farmer in Guadalupe, Texas. He served with the 4th Mounted Volunteers as First Bugler. He married Tobitha Sephronia "Carrie" Allen, on January 27, 1864. By 1870 he was a farmer. And he died on February 26, 1891 at age 51.

Johnson and Elizabeth had 8 Children:

⁵ <http://www.adkins9.net/individual.php?pid=I3681&ged=Adkins.GED&tab=-1>

- (1) Augustus Pleasant Wright, born 1848 and died 1920;
- (2) Eudora Elizabeth "Dora" Wright, born 1850, and died 1942;
- (3) Cynthia Ella Wright, born 1854 and died 1929;
- (4) Benjamin J. "Bede" Wright, born 1859, and died 1893;
- (5) Jessie Alice Wright born 1863, death unknown;
- (6) William Clarence Wright born 1865, died 1912;
- (7) Anna Cora Wright born 1868 and died 1964; and,
- (8) James Asa Wright M.D. born 1873, and died 1942.

I switch sources again to get the information on my Great Grandfather, **James Asa Wright M.D.**⁶

James was born on June 17, 1873 in Blue Ridge, Falls County Texas, and died October 24, 1943 in San Antonio Texas. In 1898 He signed up with Rough Riders and served in Cuba with the Houston 1st Volunteers. In 1900, the same year of his marriage, he had been working as a Cable Car operator in Galveston. He survived the great Hurricane and moved his family by Covered Wagon to Norman Oklahoma. He attended the University of Oklahoma where he received his Bachelors. Then he graduated from their first Medical School Class, in 1913. He served as a railroad doctor in New Mexico in 1916, and also formulated his own medicines.

His wife was Susan Margaret Rosser, whom he married on November 28, 1900. She was born in 1881 and died in 1956.

They had 11 Children:

- (1) Eleanor Frances Wright 1902-1971;
- (2) Emily Marie Wright 1904-1944;
- (3) Johnson "Joe" V. Wright;
- (4) Margaret Elizabeth Wright;
- (5) Clarence Rosser Wright 1911-1990;
- (6) Cora Venice Wright;
- (7) Mary Allen Wright Major;
- (8) Ewell Eugene Wright;
- (9) Ida Mable Wright 1919-2007;
- (10) Fred Dwight Lewis Wright 1922-1924*; and,
- (11) Robert M. Wright Sr. born 1924 and died in 1990/91.

Robert Max Wright Sr. Was born on November 22, 1924 and died in January 1, 1990. He attended Texas A&M but was graduated early to serve in World War II as an Engineer. He met his wife in Manila during the war, and married her there. She was Paula Wright Concilio, born October 22, 1922 and died September 6, 2001.

Robert attended Medical School at Baylor Medical School. He became a Cardiovascular surgeon, and trained under Dr. DeBakey. Robert and Paula Had 6 Children:

- (1) Robert Max Wright Jr. M.D.—February 26, 1948;
- (2) Judith Wright;
- (3) Jill Wright;
- (4) Keith Wright;
- (5) Johnathon Wright: stillborn; and,
- (6) Byron Wright.

⁶ <http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/w/a/t/Betty-S-Watson/WEBSITE-0001/UHP-0952.html>

VII. The Current Wrights.

Dr. Robert Max Wright Jr. was born on February 26, 1948. He attended the University of Texas and Graduated in 1970. He went to Baylor Medical School, and became a Plastic Surgeon. He married his wife Valerie Wright born December 1943. Valerie is the daughter of Grant A. Brown Esq. born October 8, 1906 and Died March 1st, 1987, and his wife Venita Goff, born January 1909, and died in 1974. Robert and Valerie married in Blue Bell Pennsylvania in 1977.

Robert and Valerie have two children:

- (1) Andrea Jennifer Wright M.D. born October 7, 1980. A.J. attended the University of Texas, graduating in December of 2003. She attended the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston earning her M.D. She specializes in forensic adolescent psychiatry;
- (2) Randy Allen Wright Esq. born May 23, 1985. Randy attended Saint Edward's University in Austin, Texas, where he graduated Summa Cum Laude in 2008. He then attended law school at Ave Maria School of Law. He was in the last starting class from the school's original location in Ann Arbor Michigan. The school moved to Naples, Florida during his second year of law school, and he graduated in 2011. Randy is a member of the State Bar of Texas.